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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Killing by cops in N.Y. sparks outrage

Worker gunned down in hail of 50 bullets; citywide protest called for December 6



Militant/Olga Rodríguez

Students walk out of Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn November 29 to protest police killing of Sean Bell. Two other young Black men, shot along with Bell, remain hospitalized.

BY EMILY PAUL AND DAN FEIN

JAMAICA, New York—Some 300 demonstrators marched and rallied in this largely Black community here November 26 to protest a deadly police shooting in this neighborhood the day before. The incident, in which five cops fired a hail of 50 bullets that left one young Black man dead and two seriously wounded, has sparked widespread outrage among working people. City officials and capitalist politicians have been working overtime to defuse the anger.

Sean Bell, 23, and two of his friends, Joseph Guzman, 31, and Trent Benefield, 23, had been celebrating at Bell's bachelor party November 25 at a nightclub in Jamaica. They had left the club in a car

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Texas janitors win their first union pact

BY STEVE WARSHELL

HOUSTON—Chanting "*Sí se pudo*" (Yes, we did it), some 2,000 victorious janitors and their supporters celebrated their first union contract here November 20. They also began preparations to use their union strength on the job.

The workers, who last year won their fight to be represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), ended a monthlong strike by voting to accept a three-year contract that provides for improved wages, increased hours, paid holidays, and access to health insurance. The contract covers 5,300 janitors who work for the five largest cleaning companies in the Houston area.

Under terms of the settlement, janitors' pay will increase from an average of $5.30 to $6.25 an hour on January 1, rising to $7.75 over a couple years. Their daily work schedule will increase in two years to six hours from their current four hours.

Janitors will receive six paid holidays per year, and will be able to accrue paid vacation time. Starting in 2009, workers' individual health insurance will be available for $20 per month, while family insurance will cost $175 a month.

"We have much, much more to gain, but this contract is important, it's the beginning," said Concepción Landés, one of the 1,700 janitors who went on strike.

After their vote to ratify the contract and the short victory rally that followed, the union janitors broke down into their squads as they had done throughout the strike. There they discussed how to organize to return to work and what to expect

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U.S. gov't caught spying on peace groups

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK—On November 21 the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) released nine declassified Pentagon reports that detail federal police spying on the activities of organizations in the United States opposed to Washington's war in Iraq and to military recruitment policies.

The documents, released under the Freedom of Information Act at the ACLU's request, were from the Pentagon's Threat and Local Observation Notice (TALON) database. The list was established in 2003 by the Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA), a fast-growing Department of Defense (DOD) spy agency launched four years ago to help centralize the U.S. government's "counterterrorism" spying operations. The program is part of expanding the use of the U.S. military in domestic operations under the banner of "homeland defense."

The TALON documents state that their purpose is to "alert" the Pentagon "to potential terrorist activity." The files report on protests against military recruiting, demonstrations against the U.S. war in Iraq, campus meetings, gatherings of Quaker and other pacifist groups, and hundreds of other activities.

In an April 2005 report, a cop from the Federal Protective Service, part of the Department of Homeland Security, detailed plans by groups in Atlanta to hold protests against the Iraq war. "This update is submitted to clarify why the Students for Peace and Justice represent a potential threat to DOD personnel," it stated. The report noted that "at least two

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After walkout, meatpackers press fight against firings

BY SETH DELLINGER

WASHINGTON, November 28—Following a November 16–17 walkout by 1,000 workers at the Smithfield pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, all those who engaged in the job action are back to work, having won a guarantee from the company that they would not be disciplined. Also back on the job are nearly 60 workers who had been fired for allegedly not having proper papers. It was the firings that sparked the walkout. The company said they would be given 60 days to resolve questions regarding their immigration status.

On November 21 a dozen meatpackers elected by their coworkers met with company representatives, a meeting that Smithfield bosses agreed to as part of ending the two-day walkout. The workers also asked Father Carlos Arce, a local Catholic priest, to attend the meeting after Smithfield refused to allow any United Food and Commercial Workers Union representatives to participate. The UFCW has an ongoing campaign to organize the Tar Heel plant.

Israel Ramírez, one of the workers who took part in the meeting, said in a November 27 phone interview that the company organized a dozen handpicked employees to attend it.

"We submitted 20 questions" said Ramírez, 30, a kill floor worker originally from Mexico. He said they demanded an explanation for the firings and "we also asked about the abusive treatment in the plant. The supervisors are always yelling. Sometimes they prevent workers from using the bathroom. There have been racist incidents. The speed of the line is too fast. And when someone gets injured, they never want to let them go to the clinic."

Ramírez said many coworkers complain of pain in their arms and hands from

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Book by Chinese-Cuban generals sparks lively exchange in Caracas

Presented at Venezuela's international book fair

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

CARACAS, Venezuela—Since its publication early this year, *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* has been presented and discussed at nearly 25 meetings in the United States, Cuba, and elsewhere.

The launching of the book at Venezuela's Second International Book Fair here in Caracas had a unique character, however. It was marked by the participation of young Chinese-Venezuelans and recent immigrants from China, as well as by the presence on the panel of a number of Venezuelan and Cuban agronomists who have been deeply involved in agricultural programs in Venezuela established here with Cuban collaboration.

Remarks by panelists at the November 18 meeting, attended by an overflow crowd of about 75 people, sparked a lively exchange of views. Counterposed opinions were presented on diverse and important political questions, including whether Venezuelans of Chinese origin face racist discrimination today and, if so, how to combat it, as well as the place of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in efforts to meet the need for food and fiber in various parts of the world.

The panel discussion was one of numerous such meetings organized as part of the November 9–19 book fair.

The panelists were Honey Liu Lin, director of the Wei Jing Chinese language school in the Chacaíto neighborhood of Caracas, who also teaches Mandarin there; Vilma Chirinos, coordinator of the Special Urban Agriculture Program in Venezuela; Elisa Panadés, representative in Venezuela of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations; Egidio Páez, coordinator of South-to-South, an agricultural cooperation agreement between Cuba, Venezuela, and the FAO; and Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written* and president of Pathfinder Press, the book's publisher.

The composition of the panel reflected

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Also Inside:

Australian and New Zealand troops sent to quell rebellion against monarchy in Tonga

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Australian and New Zealand military forces seized Tonga's main airport November 18. They were rushed there after protests for democratic rights in the Pacific nation exploded November 16.

About 150 soldiers and police officers from the two imperialist powers began enforcing a state of emergency declared the previous day by the government of Prime Minister Feleti Sevele.

Within a week the foreign troops were patrolling the capital city of Nuku'alofa—the center of the rebellion—alongside Tongan security forces.

Sevele's government is beholden to the royal family, which rules over Tonga's population of 114,000. The king appoints the government and 21 of the parliament's 30 members.

Political tensions mounted over the second week of November as thousands of people gathered outside parliament in Nuku'alofa to demand democratic rights. On November 16 the government recessed parliament without responding to the protesters.

An angry crowd first gathered outside Sevele's offices. Some protesters then fanned out through downtown Nuku'alofa, setting fire to businesses believed to be linked to King George Tupou V and other members of the royal family.

Nearly 30 Chinese-owned shops were set afire or looted, the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported. Most reports say that up to 80 percent of the business district was ruined.

Six people, reportedly protesters, were found dead among the burnt-out ruins. King Tupou dismissed the protest as the work of "a small but dangerous criminal element." As Tongan government troops and cops began patroling the streets, Sevele asked the governments of New Zealand and Australia to intervene.

Defying a government ban on groups of more than five people gathering in Nuku'alofa, opposition leaders called a November 21 press conference to speak out against the intervention.

"New Zealand and Australia's role in this exercise is seen as supporting the present regime," said opposition member of parliament Clive Edwards.

Akilisi Pohiva, a veteran leader of the movement for democratic rights, said the events were "the end product of a long period of frustration, of a long period of struggle against a dictatorial regime that has been ruling this country for years." Dozens of supporters of the democratic rights movement were imprisoned in the first few days of the state of emergency.

Demands for democratic freedoms have gained momentum in Tonga over the past two years, with large protests against the government and monarchy and a six-week strike last year by the Public Service Association, a new union organizing government employees. The PSA members campaigned for support for their fight among the large Tongan communities in New Zealand and elsewhere.

On Sept. 6, 2005—having wrested wage increases from the government—the PSA workers marked their victory with a 10,000-strong march backing calls for democratic rights. They presented a petition at the time signed by more than 20,000 people calling for reforms to curb the power of the monarchy.

The New Zealand and Australian prime ministers, Helen Clark and John Howard, shaped their military intervention during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference held in Vietnam November 18–19. Clark claimed the imperialist intervention "is about supporting a proper process of constitutional reform."

Justifying the occupation, Howard declared, "Clearly one of the problems in the Pacific is that many of these countries are too small to be sustainable on their own. And that's just a brutal reality."



Reuters/Kirk Hargraves

New Zealand soldiers stand outside airport November 18 in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, a Pacific nation where Australian and New Zealand troops were sent to quell anti-monarchy revolt.

Toronto: Communist League candidate in mayoral debate

BY ANNETTE KOURI

TORONTO—"My campaign opposes the arrests of 18 Muslim men on charges of conspiracy to commit 'terrorism,'" said Joseph Young, Communist League candidate for mayor of Toronto, at a November 3 candidates' meeting organized by the Islamic Foundation of Toronto. Many in the audience of 200 applauded his remarks.

The 18 men, arrested in June, "have already been found guilty by the media, and most have been denied bail," Young said.

"If elected as mayor, what will you do to protect our legal rights and to stop the hatred and discrimination against us?" Azba Hathiyani, a 12th-grade student, asked all the candidates from the floor.

Young, a union meat packer, answered that bosses and their government use racism to try to divide workers. "Working people have a responsibility to fight against all discrimination and for the respect of all religious beliefs and cultures," he said.

Disagreeing with the pro-capitalist mayoral candidates who argued that the cops should be strengthened, Young said, "The police are a repressive force for the rich." He noted that over the last five and a half years, 34.5 percent of those fatally shot by the police in Ontario were Black, even though Blacks represent only 3.6 percent of the population.

Answering a question about homelessness, Young pointed to the Cuban Revolution as an example where workers and farmers have taken political power and organized to meet the social needs of the majority. "Homelessness is not a problem in Cuba as it is in capitalist countries," he said.

During the campaign, the Communist League, which also ran Michel Dugré for city council in Ward 12 and Beverly Bernardo in Ward 14, put forward a working-class alternative to the pro-capitalist candidates. The Communist League candidates defended the right to strike of Toronto transit workers who are fighting to defend their contract and demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Canadian troops from Afghanistan. They championed the fight for Quebec independence.

Young received 2,264 votes, or 0.4 percent of the total, putting him in 11th place out of 38 mayoral candidates.

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U.S. government spying

Continued from front page

members of the Atlanta area Students for Peace and Justice have expressed interest in doing more than just protesting and want to be more aggressive in conducting 'civil disobedience.'"

In another report later that month, TALON records an incident where a local army recruiter walked into an "anti-war memorial" in New Orleans organized by Veterans for Peace, and a confrontation with some of the protesters allegedly ensued. "Veterans for Peace claim to be non-violent," the report states. "This incident demonstrates a propensity for violence, and the Veterans for Peace should be viewed as a possible threat to Army and DOD personnel."

In December 2005 NBC News reported on CIFA files listing more than 1,500 "suspicious incidents" nationwide over a 10-month period. Among these were two protests at the State University of New York in Albany. SUNY student Ben O'Shaughnessy, a Young Socialists member, told the *Militant* that students read in the press at the time how the Pentagon had spied on activities organized by Campus Action and the Campus Greens earlier that year, including an April march by 100 students against military recruiting on campus.

"This is a clear example of how the government's 'antiterror' campaign targets the political rights of working people and youth at home as well as furthering U.S. imperialist interests abroad," O'Shaughnessy said.

'We fixed it'

In a November 21 *New York Times* article, acting CIFA director Daniel Baur argued that the Pentagon's files on peace groups were just a mistake. "I don't want it, we shouldn't have had it, not interested in it," he said, insisting that once the "problem" was discovered, "we fixed it."

Regarding Baur's assertion that CIFA had stopped collecting files on political groups, Michael McPhearson, executive director of Veterans for Peace, told the *Times*, "I don't believe it."

The *Washington Post* reported in March that the Pentagon agency has spent more than $1 billion since it was established in 2002, growing into an operation "with nine directorates and widening authority." It has contracted corporations such as Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman to develop "antiterrorist" programs to comb through commercial databases and individual e-mail "to provide comprehensive information about people of interest."

A number of other federal police agencies are snooping on opponents of Washington's policies. In October the FBI released documents showing that it has been monitoring groups protesting the Iraq war. In December 2005, Washington admitted that the National Security Agency tapped hundreds if not thousands of U.S. phone calls to people in other countries without applying for a warrant. U.S. officials have defended the domestic spying as a "wartime necessity."

Congress voted in March to renew the 2001 Patriot Act, which grants increased powers to the FBI and other police agencies to conduct spying, searches, and seizures in private homes and businesses, among other things.

Democrats and Republicans have been steadily pushing to legitimize the expanded use of the political police in the name of "fighting terrorism" at home. They seek to eliminate restraints that were placed on police spying and disruption operations under the impact of the struggle for Black rights and the movement against the Vietnam War. Senate hearings in 1975 detailed sweeping constitutional rights violations by military and other federal intelligence units against opponents of the Vietnam War, supporters of the Black and Chicano struggles, the women's liberation movement, the unions, communists, and others.

A 1973 lawsuit by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against FBI and CIA spying and harassment shed further light on such operations. In 1986 a federal court ruled in favor of the SWP and YSA. The record of this victory and of the disruption campaigns can be found in the Pathfinder Press books *FBI On Trial* and *COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom.*

Scotland: protesters denounce racist beating



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

EDINBURGH, Scotland—Hundreds of people, mostly Sikhs, marched in the Pilrig area of this city November 19 to protest a racist attack on a Sikh teenager five days earlier. "It was completely unprovoked," said Bruce Singh, 20, a second cousin of the 15-year-old victim whose name has not been released. "He was walking through the park and four youths beat him and cut his hair with a knife. They would have known his religion. This protest is showing how much the community is not happy with what happened." Sikhs do not cut their hair because of their religious beliefs. Demonstrators came from across the country to join the demonstration. Amandeep Singh, 23, was part of a 100-strong group from London. "As soon as we heard about it, we booked coaches. This shouldn't be happening—we shouldn't have to take persecution in today's civilization." Busloads also came from Birmingham and Glasgow.

—CAROLINE BELLAMY

Washington uses assassination of Lebanese official to press campaign against Syria, Iran

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The U.S. government is using the November 21 assassination of Lebanon's industry minister, Pierre Gemayel, to press its campaign against Syria and Iran. Washington accused the two governments of interfering in Lebanon and not doing enough to prevent the use of their borders by armed groups entering Iraq to fight the U.S.-led occupation.

Gemayel was a figure in the ultrarightist Phalange Party, which is backed by wealthy Maronite Christians. He was a leader of the majority coalition in the Lebanese parliament, which opposes Hezbollah and other forces allied with the Syrian government. Many of those who turned out for Gemayel's funeral carried signs demanding the resignation of Lebanon's pro-Syria president, Emile Lahoud.

The day of the assassination, the governments of Syria and Iraq announced the resumption of their diplomatic relations. Speaking in Baghdad with his Iraqi counterpart, Syrian foreign minister Walid al-Muallem said his government "seeks future cooperation with the United States in all fields," suggesting it might consider collaborating with Washington in Iraq.

John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said Washington would consider it a "serious problem" if an investigation showed Syrian involvement in Gemayel's death. On the eve of a summit in Jordan with Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, U.S. president George Bush alleged that the Lebanese government was being "undermined" by "extremist forces encouraged out of Syria and Iran."

The White House has been pushing for a special UN-sponsored tribunal to try suspects in the 2005 car bomb assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, an outspoken opponent of the Syrian presence in Lebanon. On November 13 the Lebanese cabinet approved a UN draft proposal to establish the tribunal. Cabinet members from the Shiite-based groups Hezbollah and Amal resigned ahead of the meeting in a failed attempt to block the decision. Lahoud called the cabinet meeting illegitimate because of the resignations.

In multi-party talks, Hezbollah has demanded a larger share of cabinet seats, which would give it effective veto power. The majority bloc in the government, which won the elections after Hariri's assassination, has refused the proposal. Hezbollah has threatened to hold mass street protests unless its demand is met.

The political divisions in Lebanon are rooted in a divide-and-rule setup imposed by French imperialism, the former colonial power there. It largely disenfranchised the Muslim majority and ensured that the president and armed forces chief would be Maronite Christians. Lesser posts were split among Sunni and Shiite Muslims. A 1958 revolt against this arrangement was contained with U.S. military intervention.

In 1976 Syrian troops entered Lebanon's civil war to prop up the government and its rightist allies, who were facing defeat by Lebanese nationalists and Palestinian refugees. Five Arab heads of state and Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yassir Arafat then met to broker a deal in which Syrian troops and a few units from other countries would police the country under command of the Lebanese government.

Syrian troops were withdrawn from Lebanon in the wake of massive protests following the February 2005 assassination of Hariri, for which many Lebanese held Damascus responsible.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

IOWA

Des Moines

Venezuela, Cuba's Socialist Revolution, and the World Today. Speaker: Christian Castro, Young Socialists, recently returned from Venezuela International Book Fair. Sat., Dec. 9. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. *3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.*

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Jail The Cops Who Killed Sean Bell! Speakers to be announced. Fri., Dec. 8. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. *306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor (use north set of elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.*

TEXAS

Houston

How Asian Immigrants Fought Racist Attacks. Video showing of *Ancestors in the Americas* part II. Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m. *4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 869-6550.*

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Police Are Killing Us! Protest the Police Killing of Sean Bell. Rally at One Police Plaza, downtown New York City. Wed., Dec. 6, 4:30 p.m.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

March and Rally to Defend Affirmative Action. Mon., Dec. 4, 9 a.m. rally in front of the Supreme Court, then march to the Lincoln Memorial. *For more information: www.bamn.com.*

Machinists strike Arizona missile plant

BY MICHAEL ORTEGA
AND NAOMI CRAINE

TUCSON, Arizona, November 25—Morale is high on the picket lines here at a Raytheon missile plant where more than 1,400 workers have been on strike since their contract expired November 5. The workers, organized by International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local Lodge 933, are fighting the company's attempt to maintain a wage cap for current employees, eliminate pension plans for new hires, and significantly raise the cost of workers' health-care coverage.

"It's the medical coverage," said Larry Budd, a forklift operator who has worked at the plant since 1986, explaining why he and others are determined to stand up and fight. Strikers say they are especially angry about the takeback demands because the union accepted concessions in the previous contract and Raytheon is now asking for more while enjoying increased profits.

Raytheon Missile Systems is the largest private employer in southern Arizona, with 11,000 employees at its Tucson facilities. Some 1,900 are production workers, 1,400 of them unionized. Ten days before the strike, the defense contractor, which makes Tomahawk and air-to-air missiles, announced a third-quarter profit increase of 41 percent.

The company's contract proposal would nearly double workers' weekly medical premiums over the next three years while leaving the door open for increases in co-payments, deductibles, annual maximums, and other costs.

IAM Local 933 notes in an informational leaflet that 25 percent of workers at the Raytheon plant haven't had a raise in years, and many won't get one under the proposed contract because of job classification wage caps. Average hourly earnings of union members range between $10 and $23.

Striker Chris Korchmaros said the company was trying to scrap pensions for future employees and replace them with a 401(k) plan.

The strikers have received solidarity from other unions, including the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 99 and an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local. More than 500 strikers and supporters turned out for a rally and barbecue outside the main plant November 22.

"Teamsters from UPS have been among the unions refusing to cross the picket line," said striking warehouse worker Oscar Rodríguez.

IAM spokesperson Carmen Fotheringham noted in a phone interview that Teamsters who drive public buses have also refused to cross the line, dropping off scabs by the pickets rather than on company property.

Unionists remarked that some of the engineers have been sympathetic to their fight. "They've got these guys working 10 hours a day, 7 days a week and they're not happy that they're breaking their knuckles," said Patrick Ongley, one of the strikers.

"Keep up the good work. A lot of engineers are depending on you too," an engineer who was a former production worker told the pickets as he dropped off a box of elk meat at the line today.

Fotheringham said that 160 strikers have crossed the line.

Bobbi Hawkins, a custodian with two months on the job, said she had joined the union in her first week and is striking despite company threats to fire her. "If you don't have a strong union, you never get anywhere," she said.

David Argüello contributed to this article.



Militant/Naomi Craine
Striking Machinists picket Raytheon missile plant in Tucson, Arizona, November 25.

Federal court extends prison sentence for Palestinian rights backer Al-Arian

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—A federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, on November 16 declared Palestinian rights supporter Sami Al-Arian in contempt of court and added 18 months to his prison sentence, which stems from a previous government "antiterrorist" frame-up. The court punished Al-Arian for refusing to testify before a grand jury about a Virginia-based Islamic think tank.

In February 2003 federal cops arrested Al-Arian, a professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa, on charges of "racketeering, conspiracy to maim and murder," and providing "material support" to the group Palestinian Islamic Jihad. He was jailed, denied bail, put in solitary confinement, and fired from his job. Numerous demonstrations and meetings were organized by his defenders.

In December 2005 the U.S. government's case against Al-Arian collapsed when a jury acquitted him and two others of "terrorism" charges. Federal prosecutors were unable to link Al-Arian or other defendants to any "terrorist" acts during the five-month trial, despite presenting nearly 80 witnesses, 1,800 faxes, wiretap transcripts, and e-mails. After the verdict, Al-Arian was returned to prison while the government decided on whether to retry him on some of the deadlocked charges or to seek to deport him.

In April, Al-Arian accepted a plea agreement on a charge of "conspiracy to provide services" to an organization labeled "terrorist" by Washington. This conviction allowed the U.S. government to deport him.

Al-Arian, however, has refused to answer questions from the grand jury, saying that cooperating with the grand jury amounted to a "forced cooperation [that] violated the plea agreement" he made with prosecutors in Tampa. Al-Arian, who was due to be released from prison and deported in April, now he could be imprisoned until November 2008.

Coal miners bring solidarity to Alabama Goodyear picket



Militant/Clay Dennison
Dozens of miners visited the Goodyear picket line in Gadsden, Alabama, November 22.

BY CLAY DENNISON

GADSDEN, Alabama—"This was my first time on a picket line. It was a great experience!" said coal miner Johnny T. Keye, who said he was glad to show support for striking Goodyear workers.

Keye, a young worker from the Oak Grove mine near Birmingham, was one of dozens of members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) who joined the United Steelworkers picket line, November 22, at the Goodyear tire plant here.

The miners came in a car caravan that started in Brookwood, Alabama, and traveled two hours to Gadsden. They represented UMWA locals at Jim Walter Resources no. 4 and 7 mines as well as the Oak Grove mine.

The unionists brought canned goods and contributions from mine bathhouse collections and local union contributions as well as money collected by UMWA District 20—about $8,000 according to UMWA international vice president Darryl Dewberry.

After greetings from officials of the striking union at the Goodyear plant and remarks by Dewberry, the miners spent a couple of hours with the strikers. Also joining the picket line were Steelworkers from a Goodrich tire plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and the Imerys marble quarry and processing plant in Sylacauga, Alabama.

Goodyear strikers said the company now has about 200 scabs working in the plant.

Many rubber workers told UMWA members how happy they were to see them join the picket line, and discussed the need for solidarity between unions. The miners' contract expires December 31.

Clay Dennison is a member of UMWA Local 2133.

D.C. march to defend affirmative action

BY TIM MAILHOT

WASHINGTON, D.C.—More than 1,000 students at Howard University here gathered in Cramton Auditorium November 13 to hear plans for a December 4 march and rally to defend affirmative action. Speakers included representatives of the group By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), the NAACP, and the Rainbow PUSH coalition.

The December 4 march and rally coincides with the opening of oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in two cases that challenge school desegregation plans in Louisville, Kentucky, and in Seattle. Among the numerous endorsers of the action are the NAACP, American Federation of Teachers, and Chinese for Affirmative Action.

At the November 13 meeting Shanta Driver, a national spokesperson for BAMN, noted the importance of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ruled against segregation in educational facilities. She called on Howard students to help reach out to students at American University and George Washington University to build the planned event.

Arnita Hayden, coordinator of the Howard Undergraduate Student Assembly, reviewed decisions by the Supreme Court over the past 30 years that she said weakened affirmative action and desegregation.

Stefanie Brown, head of the youth and college division of the NAACP, said that today 70 percent of African-American students attend schools whose student bodies are predominantly Black and from other oppressed nationalities. "This is not about quotas," she said. "This is about whether or not our children or grandchildren will attend schools with inferior resources."

Student groups are organizing meetings twice a week on campus to build the December 4 rally. The action will be at 9:00 a.m. in front of the Supreme Court building, followed by a march to the Lincoln Memorial. More information is available online at www.bamn.com.

Northwest ramp workers protest contracting out of union jobs

MINNEAPOLIS—Baggage handlers at Northwest Airlines here took part in on-the-job actions during some of the busiest travel days of the year to discuss and protest the company's announcement that it will contract out the airplane lavatory, water service, and cleaning jobs in mid-December. The airline's move would lead to the loss of 30 full-time union jobs. The International Association of Machinists (IAM), which represents ground workers and customer service agents, already accepted a concessionary contract earlier in 2006 in which wages, benefits, and jobs were cut.

On November 20 some 100 ground workers gathered during the evening shift, and 250 met during the day shift the next day, workers reported. At both meetings IAM District 143 president Steve Gordon stated the union's opposition to the contracting out of the union jobs.

On November 22, 300 day shift workers gathered on the ramp near an airplane gate to support lavatory and water servicers, who were told by the union shop committee to refuse to service aircraft in protest of the company plan to replace them in December.

Shortly after that action began, Northwest bosses and local union shop committee members asked workers to return to their work locations. Despite repeated requests, the workers all sat down on the ground or on equipment. They dispersed after 35 minutes with the understanding that company officials would meet with union representatives the next day to discuss the issue and that ramp workers were to gather at the same location at 9:00 a.m. to press their demands.

On November 23, union shop committee members announced that Northwest had refused to meet to discuss the issue and threatened to discipline any workers who gathered, and that airport security would be called to arrest those participating in any action. The planned union event was cancelled. The same day Northwest introduced nonunion lavatory and water servicers as well as aircraft cleaners on the ramp.



Some 300 Northwest Airlines workers briefly stopped working at Minneapolis airport November 22 to protest the company's contracting out of work to nonunion company.

The conflict goes back to a 2005 strike against Northwest Airlines by mechanics and cleaners represented by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association. As part of their strike-breaking moves, the company temporarily gave cleaning work previous done by AMFA members to members of the IAM, whose leadership did not support the strike.

The company claims the recent settlement of the AMFA dispute allowed it to shift the jobs to a nonunion contractor. It said the displaced IAM members will be moved to other jobs.

—Tom Fiske

Day laborers in N.Y. town win antidiscrimination victory

A federal judge ruled November 20 that day laborers faced discriminatory treatment by officials in Mamaroneck, New York. Judge Colleen McMahon cited town practices of police harassment of the workers, the closing of a hiring site, and the fining of contractors who approached laborers seeking a job. She gave each side 10 days to come up with solutions to this situation. The ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed by day laborers in April against the village of Mamaroneck, located 23 miles northeast of New York City.

This ruling "send a very clear message…that day laborers have rights and that municipal governments that ignore those rights will be held responsible," Cesar Perales, president of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, which represented the workers in the lawsuit, told the *New York Times.*

The court decision is the third legal victory for immigrant day laborers in recent months. Earlier in November officials in Freehold, New Jersey, were forced to let laborers seek work in public places without being fined. In May, a judge ordered the city of Redondo Beach, California, to halt police arrests of day laborers seeking work on public streets.

—Brian Williams

Poland: 23 coal miners killed in methane gas explosion

Twenty-three coal miners were killed November 23 in Ruda Slaska, Poland, in a methane gas explosion more than two-thirds of a mile below the surface at the Halemba mine in the southern part of the country. This brings the death toll for 2006 to 43 miners in Poland. The coal miners had been sent to retrieve equipment from a shaft closed in March because of very high gas concentrations. The Halemba coal mine, which is one of the oldest running mines in Poland, had been in operation since 1957. A gas explosion at this mine killed 19 workers in 1990.

—Brian Williams

Smithfield workers back on job

Continued from front page

the fast, repetitive work. The Tar Heel plant, the largest hog-slaughter facility in the world, with 5,000 workers, kills more than 30,000 hogs daily.

Emily Sanchez, 22, said in a phone interview that four coworkers on her cutting line do work that should be done by seven. "The supervisors complain about the quality of our work, but they are demanding too much. It's too fast," she said.

Sanchez was one of those who walked out. "I wanted to support my coworkers because what the company is doing isn't fair," she explained. Sanchez, born in Mexico, said the action showed that "we are united," noting that the Latin American immigrants were joined by a few workers who are Black or Native American. "Some of them were also mad about other things that have been happening here," she added.

Workers expressed dissatisfaction with the meeting. "First of all, they barely let us speak, and second, they did not give clear answers to our questions," Ramírez said. At the meeting Smithfield representatives insisted that workers would have to show proper immigration papers or face dismissal. The company claims to have a list of more than 500 workers whose Social Security numbers on file do not match federal records. Ramírez said a discussion is now taking place in the plant about what to do in the case of future firings.

Houston janitors win first-ever union contract

Continued from front page

on the first day back on the job. They all signed cards to make clear to the companies that they are union members.

Throughout the strike the workers organized actions—from picket lines to rallies, marches, and sit-ins—that reached out to fellow unionists, students, and other supporters. Company representatives threatened strikers, the majority of whom are immigrants.

On November 16, Houston cops—a number mounted on horses—backed up the companies in the strike, arresting 44 unionists and supporters and injuring at least four in attacks on union picketing activities.

"Through it all," Landés said, "We were organized and confident, and we won."

"They thought we would never stay united," Flor Aguilar, a janitor who was a member of the bargaining committee, told the *Militant.* "They thought they could bully us into backing down, but they were wrong."

The unionists campaigned for more than a year and a half before the strike, organizing rallies and demonstrations, first to gain union recognition and then for a contract. They organized contingents in the mass demonstrations for the legalization of undocumented immigrants on April 10 and May 1 as well as on September 4.

With the new contract, the SEIU now organizes janitorial workers at nearly 75 percent of the office buildings in Houston. Union organizers now say they will set their sights on the smaller cleaning companies in town.

The janitors' victory was enthusiastically welcomed by workers here. Many have been closely watching their actions. Ercilio Romero, a garment worker, told of the discussion in his workplace, "This really raised our spirits—it's what workers needed to gain confidence to carry out the same fight. We can see that 'yes, we can do it.'"

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 11, 1981

Newark, N.J.—In the recent state elections, the Republican National Committee deployed an armed force of about 200 in some seventy-five precincts in New Jersey. Their operations were confined to Black and Puerto Rican districts.

Many of the men were armed off-duty cops; others were leased for the occasion from a "security firm" owned by Newark Republican State Assemblyman Anthony Imperiale. The all-white mercenaries wore armbands and called themselves the National Ballot Security Task Force.

At a cost to the Republicans of $90,000, the men were paid to post thousands of four-foot-high placards "warning" that the areas were "being patrolled" by the task force. The signs offered a $1,000 reward to anyone with information leading to conviction on "voter fraud."

[V]oters report being stopped by the goons outside polling places and ordered to show voter registration cards. It is not necessary to have cards in order to vote.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

December 10, 1956

The little country of Syria with its three-and-a-half million population has become the new object of attack by the foes of the national independence revolution of the Arab peoples. These foes include the principal imperialist powers—the U.S., Britain, and France; their outright stooges among the Arab states especially the government of Iraq; the Turkish, Iranian and Pakistani governments; and the government of Israel.

What has Syria done? According to the propaganda of the imperialist nations and their stooges, Syria has become a menace to the peace of the Middle East, because she has sought arms from the Soviet Union. This is supposed to make her a servant of Soviet "ambitions," indeed a base for Soviet attack on Syria's neighbors.

But this claim is only the pretext for the gang-up on Syria. Actually, Syria has bought arms from the Soviet Union for the same reason Egypt bought arms from that source—she could obtain them readily with no political commitments.



THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

December 12, 1931

Italian fascism has recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its coming to power. At the end of October 1922, the fascist coup d'etat gave the Italian bourgeoisie new means of exploiting and dominating the working masses. Since this time, the situation of the masses has grown continually worse. All their victories, the result of a half-century of struggle and sacrifice both on the political and the economic field, were swept away by brutality and violence.

What is the present situation in Italy? This is what an old comrade, recently returned from there, says:

"Unemployment is terrible. Among workers' families, there are few who have jobs. Relief amounts to nothing, and when the relief chest is empty, even those miserable payments are suspended…. In the country, poverty is still worse. Poor markets and bad crops have finished the ruin of thousands of peasants who will not be able to pay even a part of their taxes this year."

Caracas event

Continued from front page
an important aspect of Cuba's internationalist cooperation with Venezuela: the development of small-scale urban agriculture. One of the book's three authors, Gen. Moisés Sío Wong, has been directly involved in that program and describes those efforts in some detail in the book.

In addition to the panelists, a special contribution to the program was made by Harry Villegas, a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). Villegas is widely known as Pombo, the nom de guerre given him by Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution at whose side he fought for a decade, during Cuba's revolutionary war itself as well as on internationalist missions in the Congo and Bolivia.





Militant/Amanda Ulman (above and left); Linda Joyce (top inset)

Above: Panel presenting *Our History Is Still Being Written* at Venezuela's International Book Fair November 18. From right: Panelists Honey Liu, Mary-Alice Waters, Elisa Panadés, Vilma Chirinos, and Egidio Páez, and chairperson Róger Calero. Top inset: Harry Villegas, a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, who made a special contribution under the discussion. Left: Part of the audience of 75 people.

Cuba's socialist revolution

"One of the reasons it's such an honor to have *compañero* Pombo with us today is that he is the godfather of this book," said Waters in opening her remarks. "The happy suggestion that we interview the three FAR generals of Chinese descent came from Pombo. The fact that we were able to weave together the stories of all three of them is one of the book's great strengths."

Waters described the reception the book has enjoyed in the United States and other countries, including among those of Asian ancestry.

Our History Is Still Being Written is an introduction to the Cuban Revolution, she said, a socialist revolution whose example and lessons are relevant to all those fighting imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation today—from Venezuela to the United States and elsewhere around the world.

Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—the authors of the book— "each in his own way was typical of the generation of young people who simply refused to accept the indignities and brutalities of life under the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship," Waters said. "In the mid-1950s they, like thousands of others, threw themselves into the revolutionary struggle that gave us the first free territory of the Americas and soon the victory of the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere."

The lives of the three generals span five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, from Cuba to Angola, Nicaragua, and Venezuela today, Waters noted. One of the richest parts of the book, she added, is the last section, titled, "The Special Period and Beyond," where each of the three generals describes the responsibilities he shoulders today.

Sío Wong, for example, heads Cuba's National Institute of State Reserves. In addition, one of the chapters in the book describes the efforts Sío Wong helped lead to develop small-scale urban agriculture in Cuba during the Special Period, Waters noted. The Special Period is the term Cubans use to describe the political course they adopted to confront a deep economic crisis in the 1990s, following the collapse of the regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

"At the time, enemies of the Cuban Revolution, and even some friends, were predicting that it too would implode, like the regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," Waters said. "But they simply didn't recognize that in Cuba, unlike the Soviet Union, working people have always been, and continue to be, the driving force of the revolution, with a party and government that have never betrayed their interests."

Waters pointed to the explanation in the book of how the Chinese community in Cuba is different today from those in the rest of the Americas. Responding to a question on how a son of Chinese immigrants could rise to positions of such responsibility in Cuba's government, Sío Wong says in the book: "What's the difference in the experience of Chinese in Cuba and other countries in the diaspora? The difference is that here a socialist revolution took place. The revolution eliminated discrimination based on the color of a person's skin. Above all, it eliminated the property relations that create not only economic but also social inequality between rich and poor."

Cuba's revolutionary example is needed by all those on the front lines of the class struggle today, Waters emphasized. "Because Cuba's revolutionary history is not only inspiring," she said. "It is a practical lesson for our class of *how* to fight, *how* to win against the economic and military power of the capitalists and imperialists, and most important *how* to defend what has been won."

Urban agriculture program

Elisa Panadés, who is Cuban, represents the FAO in Venezuela, where she has lived for six years.

"I had the privilege to work with General Sío Wong for two years here," she said, pointing to the clarity of his account in *Our History Is Still Being Written* of the origins of the urban agriculture program in Venezuela. She described how FAO director Jacques Diouf visited Venezuela in February 2003 and met with the country's president, Hugo Chávez. Out of that meeting agreement was reached to expand FAO's work in urban areas aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency.

Because of General Sío Wong's experience in this field in Cuba, Panadés said, the Venezuelan government invited him to collaborate with Venezuelans developing the program.

"About 87 percent of Venezuela's population lives in cities," Panadés noted. "This is a higher rate than Latin America's 75 percent and the worldwide average of 50 percent. So there was merit to the idea of developing urban agriculture where people could have access to fresh produce directly from the land to the table."

Vilma Chirinos was among the Venezuelans who collaborated with Sío Wong from the beginning of the urban agricultural program here, aimed at reducing the country's dependency on food imports and improving the quality of produce. Venezuela today imports some 60 percent of its food. Chirinos heads the country's program of intensive urban vegetable gardens, called *organopónicos.*

"We started in 2003 with three production units" in Caracas, Chirinos said, and have now expanded to 44 across the country. "We are writing history here in Venezuela, too," she added.

Egidio Páez, who directs the South-to-South agricultural cooperation program here, described his work in developing urban agriculture in his native Cuba prior to coming to Venezuela last year. Sío Wong helped propel this program forward during the Special Period, he noted, "a very critical moment in Cuba, when we had lost 80 percent of our foreign trade."

As the book describes in the section "Facing the Food Crisis," the creation of organoponic farms in Cuba was a response to severe food shortages there in the 1990s. "We tried to produce 25 kilograms [55 pounds] of food per square meter per year, a target set by Sío Wong based on production of similar type in China," Páez said. The creation of these gardens has substantially improved the quantity and quality of fresh vegetables available for most Cubans. Today almost as many Cubans are working in small-scale agriculture as on traditional large-scale farms.

Páez also described working with Gen. Armando Choy, another of the authors of the book, in the reforestation of Havana province and the work to restore the environmental health of Havana Bay.

Chinese in Venezuela

Honey Liu, who in addition to running the Chinese language school is also studying law, described the character of the Chinese immigration to Venezuela, which began in the 19th century but continues today. "There are now approximately 150,000 Chinese in Venezuela," she said, most of whom have arrived in the country in the last 30 years, and their numbers are growing.

Sofía Xu and Kelly Jiang, who also teach Mandarin at the Wei Jing school and are recent immigrants from China, accompanied Liu to the book event. Kawa Cheang and Joaquin Fung, two other Venezuelans of Chinese descent, also took part.

The involvement of the Chinese-Venezuelans in the event grew out of a trip here in October by *Militant* reporters who met individuals in Caracas's Chinese community and introduced them to the book.

Chinese immigrants here are from all different social classes, Liu said. "Many are peasants, or workers," she noted, while others are professionals or business owners.

Liu explained that most Chinese arrive here with enormous debts to pay off, including exorbitant fees to travel contractors and for immigration taxes levied in Venezuela.

"The Chinese here are viewed in a racist way," she said, "both by some of

Continued on page 7

Venezuela book fair shows thirst for culture, politics



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Kuai Mare, the Venezuelan state book distributor, which sells at subsidized prices, had the busiest stand (shown here November 19) at the International Book Fair in Caracas.

BY MAGGIE TROWE
AND RÓGER CALERO

CARACAS—Venezuela's Second International Book Fair closed here November 19 and is now traveling to cities across the country's 23 states. According to the National Book Center (CENAL), which organized the event, more than 700,000 people browsed through exhibits by 146 publishers from 18 countries during the 11 days the fair was open in this capital city. This is a substantial increase from last year's turnout of half a million.

The fair registered the expansion of both titles and quantities of books made accessible to working people by the government at subsidized prices.

Thousands lined up daily at the fair to get a copy of a three-volume edition of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables.* The Ministry of Culture began distributing 1.5 million copies of this classic free of charge when the fair opened. A similar distribution of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* was one of the features of last year's book fair.

Many visitors used one or more coupons worth about $5 each to buy books. CENAL distributed them through educational and other institutions to those with low incomes.

"This is helping people get access to literature, to fight ignorance," said Maikel Rivas, a high school student visiting the fair for the third year, in a typical comment.

Kuai Mare, the government's book distribution network, has 48 outlets nationwide selling at subsidized prices. It had several kiosks at the fair and its main stand attracted far more visitors than any booth.

At the fair Kuai Mare announced it is opening an additional 50 mobile bookstores. These will be stationed at hospitals, recreational centers, military barracks, and elsewhere across the country, said Kuai Mare president Augustín Velasco. One of these units was on display at Parque del Este (Eastern Park), where the fair was held.

Francisco Sesto, Venezuela's minister of culture, said Kuai Mare will be renamed "Bookstores of the South," reflecting its effort to expand distribution throughout Latin America.

In a related project, Abel Prieto, the minister of culture of Cuba, the honored country this year, announced the establishment of the ALBA Cultural Fund, an agreement between the governments of Cuba, Bolivia, and Venezuela. Under the accord, 10,000 copies of 12 titles will be distributed in each of the three countries. These include works by Cuban writers José Martí, Roberto Fernández Retamar, and Francisco Pividal, author of a book on Simón Bolívar, a South American leader of the struggle against Spanish colonialism. The *Bolivian Diary* by Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution, will also be one of the 12.

The atmosphere at the fair was conducive to book browsing, reading, and discussion. In addition to visiting the 121 booths, people could attend seminars, concerts, film screenings, and puppet shows, or simply relax at outdoor cafés.

Many book presentations and related events were held. A highlight was the 2005 National Book Award. One of the books that won this recognition was *Mission Robinson, Yes I Could: The Extraordinary Simón Rodríguez National Literacy Plan.* It documents the literacy campaign the Venezuelan government launched in 2003 with help from Cuba. The government announced last fall that the effort's first phase—through which 1.5 million people learned basic reading, writing, and arithmetic—was completed and Venezuela was free of illiteracy.

Venezuelan poet Ramón Palomares was honored at this year's fair, along with two historic figures: Che Guevara and Francisco de Miranda, a leader of the 19th century independence struggle in Venezuela against Spanish colonial rule. Special guests included renowned Brazilian poet Thiago de Mello, who read poems and spoke at a conference on "Amazonia: Country of Water," and Mexican writer Paco Ignacio Taibo, author of *Pancho Villa: A Narrative Biography.*

Some 25 Cuban authors participated in the fair, many of them giving book presentations. They included well-known writer and poet Miguel Barnet whose *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, first published 40 years ago, received special recognition at a panel that included Abel Prieto.

A number of events were held to discuss the record of the Cuban Revolution. They included a forum attended by more than 75 people on "Ernesto Che Guevara: Testimonies by Those Who Knew Him." The panel included Harry Villegas, a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces who worked and fought alongside Che for a decade, from Cuba to the Congo and Bolivia; Ulises Estrada, another well-known Cuban internationalist who worked with Che in Africa and the Americas; and Carlos Ferrer, a childhood friend of Guevara in Argentina who traveled with him in Latin America and authored *From Ernesto to Che.*

More than 200 people attended the largest event of the fair on its last day here. It included a showing of the movie *Mission Against Terror* and a panel discussion on the campaign to free the Cuban Five. These are Cuban revolutionaries

Continued on page 8

Book by Chinese-Cuban generals presented in Caracas

Continued from page 6

the native-born Venezuelans and the authorities. I feel powerless when public officials are abusive or overstep their authority. This is always the case against the Chinese."

This reality, she said, includes abuse by the police and racist jokes and resentment directed against small businessmen such as her father, who owns a restaurant.

Liu was born in Venezuela and went to China for two years to study the language. She described her own family as typical of those who arrive with no resources, work hard, and want nothing but a better life for their children. "My father wanted his kids to work in the restaurant," she said, "so we could live better. But I decided to become a lawyer to defend the Chinese from the abuse we face. I feel as much Venezuelan as Chinese."

Compared to what the three Chinese-Cuban generals describe in *Our History Is Still Being Written,* the Chinese community in Venezuela is "more isolated," Liu said. Many speak little Spanish and their lives are almost entirely within the Chinese community, where their culture and traditions are still strong.

"I urge you to read this book," she concluded. "Reading it gave me internal peace because it helped me understand many things, especially how to fight discrimination."

'Our country is humanity'

Just as Liu was finishing, a Venezuelan in the front row of the audience burst out aggressively protesting what she had said. Why was she singling out the Chinese? he demanded to know. There are immigrants from many countries in Venezuela, he said, and Chinese aren't special targets of racism.

Róger Calero, who chaired the event on behalf of Pathfinder, brought the meeting to order and invited Harry Villegas to take the mike, as planned.

Addressing himself to Liu, Villegas talked about the racism Chinese had faced in Cuba prior to the revolution, as described in *Our History Is Still Being Written.* "This is a great book. It describes accurately the development of three men with humble origins," he said. "Their parents were very hard workers like your dad. They had to work hard to be able to provide them with a minimum of education." The revolution, he said, gave them the possibility to struggle on behalf of their country, on behalf of Cuba, "because it didn't matter any longer that they were of Chinese descent."

The society that Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong fought for became a republic based on a broader concept of humanity, Villegas said. "For us the country is not ourselves alone, not the Cubans alone, it can't be the Venezuelans alone—our country is humanity."

Villegas described how he had gotten to know each of the three Chinese-Cuban generals. He met Sío Wong in 1958 when they were both members of Column 8 of the Rebel Army led by Che Guevara. That column, formed in the Sierra Maestra mountains of Eastern Cuba, marched across central Cuba to join forces with those fighting in Las Villas province and led the victorious battle to take Cuba's second largest city, Santa Clara.

"We met Choy at the end of that offensive in Las Villas province, where he joined Che's troops," Villegas said.

He got to know Chui in the 1970s during Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola to help that country defend itself from the invasion by South Africa's apartheid regime.

Those who crossed the ocean from China, such as the forebears of the Chinese-Cuban generals, were looking for a better world, Villegas said. "It is possible to build that world," he emphasized. "But we can't go on listening to siren songs."

The history of imperialism has shown that none of the classes in power simply relinquish their interests, he said. "The capitalists, the bourgeoisie, don't agree to share even part of their wealth."

Our History Is Still Being Written, Villegas noted, describes a revolution "that the authors of the book helped make."

Farming, science, working classes

In the discussion, a young participant from Belgium asked the speakers involved in the agricultural program in Venezuela what was being done to prevent the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Campaigning against GMOs has been a focus of many leftists both in the imperialist countries and semicolonial world, as well as at international gatherings such as the World Social Forum.

The FAO has no position for or against GMOs, Panadés explained. While GMOs are not being introduced in Venezuela today, she said, there are countries and circumstances where the greater yields that the use of GMOs makes possible means the difference between food and hunger for many.

After a woman from Peru asked a similar question, Egidio Páez expanded on that reply.

Waters pointed to an article by Steve Clark on "Farming, Science, and the Working Classes" in issue 7 of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*, as well as an exchange between Clark and Harvard professor Richard Levins in that same issue that takes up the political debate over GMOs among other questions. She noted that the magazine had been presented during a similar event at the book fair three nights earlier (see December 4 *Militant*) and urged those interested in delving deeper into the subject to get a copy. Five people did so after the program.

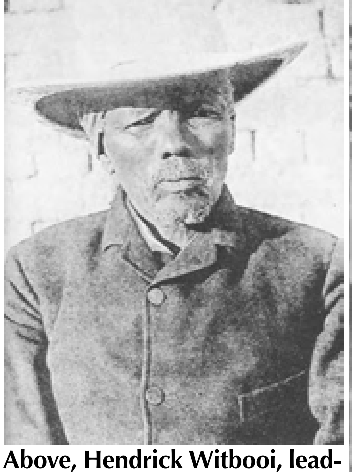
"*Our History Is Still Being Written* is a very appropriate title for this book," said Wilmer Parra, a history student at the Central University of Caracas, at the end of the discussion. Parra added that he will study the book he had just bought and urged others to do the same. He contrasted it to *The End of History* by Francis Fukuyama and other similar books that he said proliferated in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

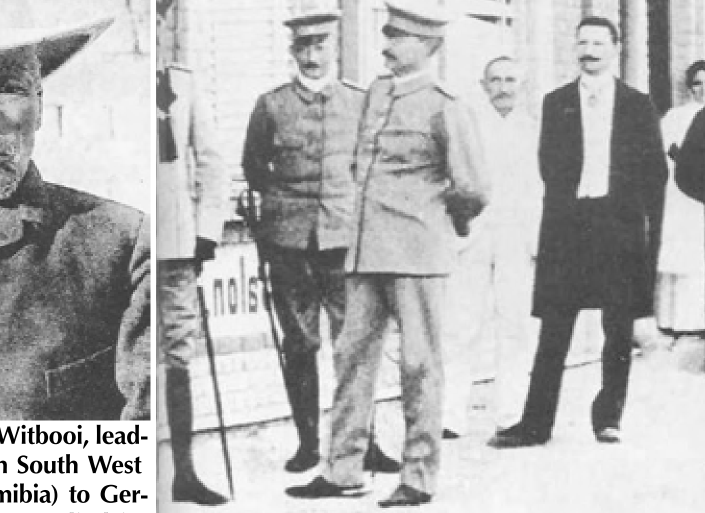
Our History Is Still Being Written was among the three best sellers from the Pathfinder booth, with the entire stock of 60 copies sold out before the book fair ended.

Africa and the first imperialist world slaughter

Below is an excerpt from W.E.B. DuBois Speaks 1890–1919, *one of Pathfinder Press's Books of the Month for December. It is the first of two volumes of his speeches and articles published by Pathfinder. Soon after the outbreak of the First World War, DuBois spoke to audiences across the country on the primary role of colonial rivalry in the imperialist conflict. The main themes of his talks were presented in the article excerpted below, which appeared in the May 1915 issue of the* Atlantic Monthly *entitled "The African Roots of War." Copyright © 1970 by Philip S. Foner and Shirley Graham DuBois. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH





Above, Hendrick Witbooi, leader of resistance in South West Africa (today Namibia) to German colonialism. He died in battle in 1905 at the age of 80. Right, German military officers and colonial officials in Windhoek, 1904. Occupied by South Africa during World War I, Namibia won its independence in 1988 in the wake of the defeat of South African forces by Cuban and Angolan troops. W.E.B. DuBois wrote about the role played by colonial rivalry in World War I.

BY W.E.B. DUBOIS

"Semper novi quid ex Africa," [Always something new from Africa] cried the Roman proconsul; and he voiced the verdict of forty centuries. Yet there are those who would write world history and leave out this most marvelous of continents. Particularly today most men assume that Africa lies far afield from the centers of our burning social problems, and especially from our present problem of World War.

Yet in a very real sense Africa is a prime cause of this terrible overturning of civilization which we have lived to see; and these words seek to show how in the Dark Continent are hidden the roots, not simply of war today but of the menace of war tomorrow….

So much for the past; and now, today: the Berlin Conference to apportion the rising riches of Africa among the white peoples met on the fifteenth day of November, 1884. Eleven days earlier, three Germans left Zanzibar (whither they had gone secretly disguised as merchants), and before the Berlin Conference had finished its deliberations they had annexed to Germany an area over half as large again as the whole German Empire in Europe. Only in its dramatic suddenness was this undisguised robbery of the land of seven million natives different from the methods by which Great Britain and France got four million square miles each, Portugal three quarters of a million, and Italy and Spain smaller but substantial areas.

The methods by which this continent has been stolen have been contemptible and dishonest beyond expression. Lying treaties, rivers of rum, murder, assassination, mutilation, rape and torture have marked the progress of Englishman, German, Frenchman, and Belgian on the Dark Continent. The only way in which the world has been able to endure the horrible tale is by deliberately stopping its ears and changing the subject of conversation while devilry went on.

It all began... with Belgium. Many of us remember Stanley's great solution of the puzzle of Central Africa when he traced the mighty Congo sixteen hundred miles from Nyangwe to the sea. Suddenly the world knew that here lay the key to the riches of Central Africa. It stirred uneasily, but Leopold of Belgium was first on his feet, and the result was the Congo Free State—God save the mark! But the Congo Free State, with all its magniloquent heralding of peace, Christianity, and commerce, degenerating into murder, mutilation and downright robbery, differed only in degree and concentration from the tale of all Africa in this rape of a continent already furiously mangled by the slave trade. That sinister traffic, on which the British Empire and the American Republic were largely built, cost black Africa no less than 100,000,000 souls, the wreckage of its political and social life, and left the continent in precisely that state of helplessness which invites aggression and exploitation. "Color" became in the world's thought synonymous with inferiority, "Negro" lost its capitalization, and Africa was another name for bestiality and barbarism.

Thus the world began to invest in color prejudice.

Venezuela's international book fair

Continued from page 7

serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons after being framed-up and convicted by Washington on charges that included "conspiracy to commit espionage."

For the third straight year, U.S.-based Pathfinder Press had a booth, selling more than 800 books, pamphlets, and magazines, a substantial increase over last year's sales.

Taken together the two most recent issues of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional were the top sellers* with combined sales of 130 copies. These were also presented at a special panel discussion during the fair (see article in December 4 *Militant*). Issue nos. 6 and 7 feature the articles "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun" and "Our Politics Start with the World," both by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The best sellers also included *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, with 120 copies, and *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, with 60 copies sold.

CENAL president Ramón Medero announced at the closing of the fair that the country of honor next year will be Argentina and the fair's theme will be "The United States: A Possible Revolution."

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EDITORIALS

Jail the cops who killed Sean Bell

The five New York cops who fired a hail of 50 bullets that killed Sean Bell and seriously wounded Joseph Guzman and Trent Benefield in Jamaica, New York, should immediately be prosecuted and jailed for their criminal actions. A big turnout for the December 6 rally in Manhattan and other such public actions can help win this demand for justice.

The big-business media and capitalist politicians are working overtime to head off any mobilizations in the streets and instead convince us to rely on Democratic and Republican politicians and the courts.

New York mayor Michael Bloomberg insists it was an "isolated incident." The problem was that cops "didn't follow regulations." Some of the cops are Black so the shooting was "not racially motivated." The police version seeks to turn the victim into the criminal, alleging that Sean Bell tried to ram the cops with his car and that police fired the 50 shots out of "panic." Big-business voices are now calling for the resignation of police commissioner Raymond Kelly and the five killer cops, or for "improved police training," or for waiting for a "fair investigation."

All this has one purpose: to cover up the real problem. The only ones on the scene with guns were the five cops did the shooting. Some witnesses say the plainclothes cop who fired first did not even identify himself before he started shooting at three men trapped in a car. One agent even emptied two magazines.

There are no excuses. The five cops must be held accountable for their deadly actions.

Improving police training or enforcing procedures is not the issue. This was *not* an isolated incident. The police killing of Bell, like that of Amadou Diallo in 1999, Patrick Dorismond in 2000, and Timothy Stansbury in 2004, is part of a pattern of police violence and racism in New York. The same is true nationwide, as brutally demonstrated by the November 21 police killing of an 88-year-old Black woman, Kathryn Johnston, in her Atlanta home.

These are all cases of how police routinely act as judge, jury, and executioner in working-class, especially Black and Latino, neighborhoods.

The fact that some of the cops who killed Bell are African-American changes nothing. A cop is a cop. The reality is that the three young men who were shot 50 times are Black—that is the racist pattern of police brutality familiar to many working people.

The entire capitalist "justice" system —police, courts, prisons, and laws —is designed to serve and protect the rule and property of the tiny class of billionaires against working people. Whenever workers go on strike, the cops are there to defend the bosses' interests and to arrest or assault the workers. This is in contrast with the example of Cuba, where working people made a revolution, took political power, and overturned capitalist rule, putting an end to the cop brutality that comes with it.

Working people need to organize independently of the bosses' government and parties—the Democrats and Republicans—and rely on our own mobilizations, and the largest working-class organizations, the unions, to advance the interests of the big majority. Jail the killer cops! All out for the December 6 rally!



Militant/Maceo Dixon

November 28 protest in Atlanta outside home of Kathryn Johnston, an 88-year-old Black woman, killed November 21 when police stormed her house.

Protest government spying!

The U.S. government has been caught red-handed spying on student, antiwar, and other groups that oppose Washington's foreign policy. Recent disclosures show that federal cops have filed reports branding organizations a "potential threat" to the Department of Defense for expressing disagreement with or sponsoring protests against U.S. government policy.

What better proof that the U.S. rulers' "antiterrorism" measures are aimed at the political rights of the vast majority? Working people should loudly oppose this government attack on the Bill of Rights.

The claim, after these facts came to light, by the chief of the Pentagon's Counterintelligence Field Activity that they "fixed" the problem was simply another cover-up.

The U.S. rulers have been working hard over the last decade and a half to win acceptance for expanding the use of their secret police. In the 1970s, working people won greater political space through the battles for Black freedom, the fight for women's rights, and the movement against the U.S. war on Vietnam. The impact of those struggles, coupled with Washington's defeat in Vietnam and the resulting Watergate scandal, helped expose some of the government's assaults on constitutional rights. The rulers decided to cut their losses and shore up the credibility of their police agencies. That was the meaning of the 1975–76 Senate Church Committee reports. The related hearings focused public attention on the use of snoops, provocateurs, wiretaps, and "black bag jobs" by the FBI and other cop agencies against opponents of government policies. These practices did not end, but cops had to use them more surreptitiously and accept some formal constraints.

In recent years, under the banner of the "war on terrorism," U.S. officials have been pushing to loosen such restrictions. They seek to institutionalize wiretapping without even the fig leaf of a warrant, increase federal centralization of "surveillance" of "suspected terrorists," establish a de facto national identity card system in the guise of Social Security numbers, expand "security" controls at airports, and promote appeals to report "suspicious" packages or behavior in public places.

What are the main rationalizations used by the U.S. rulers and their political representatives, Democrats and Republicans? Some intrusions of privacy are required of "us all" to face "terrorists" imperiling hearth and home. Civil liberties must be "balanced" against "national security." That was the main argument the government used in its defense during a lawsuit the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance filed in 1973 against FBI spying and disruption, actions a federal court declared unconstitutional in 1986.

Behind today's "homeland security" offensive and creeping militarization of civilian life is the realization by the billionaires who rule the United States that capitalism has a entered a long winter of economic depression and war. They are preparing to use rougher methods against working people who resist the effects of the crisis of the profit system.

Working people need to defend our hard-won political rights in order to protect ourselves against assaults by the employers and their state. Oppose all government domestic spying and disruption operations!

Police killing

Continued from front page

when five plainclothes cops opened fire, killing Bell. Guzman was shot 11 times and Benefield 3 times.

The two wounded men were taken to Mary Immaculate Hospital in Jamaica. They were handcuffed to their beds, and were unshackled only in response to the demonstration outside the hospital, the Associated Press reported.

The three men had left the club, Kalua Cabaret, around 4:00 a.m., and were followed by undercover cops. According to the police account, there was an altercation outside and an undercover agent heard one man refer to a gun. The cop then confronted the men in Bell's Nissan Altima, and they supposedly tried to run him over and ram the police car, prompting the fusillade by the agent and his backups.

The only guns found on the scene, however, were those of the cops. And witnesses have contradicted the police account.

According to the November 27 *New York Daily News*, Trini Wright, a dancer at the club, "insisted the cops opened fire without identifying themselves." The cops' unmarked minivan "came around the corner and smashed into their [Bell's] car. And they [the cops] jumped out shooting," she told the paper. "No 'stop.' No 'freeze.' No nothing," she said.

The *Daily News* reported, "Friends of Bell, Benefield and Guzman told cops the trio mistook the plainclothes officers conducting surveillance at the club for robbers and tried to get away." Another witness, China Flores, said the undercover cop identified himself only after he fired, the paper said.

The cops fired at least 50 rounds at the men. One cop fired 31 times, emptying two full magazines. Bullets struck other cars and a nearby apartment window.

The next day Bell, who had worked as a milk delivery driver, was to have wed Nicole Paultre, 22, the mother of his two young daughters.

"Fifty shots, and no one is shooting back at you? That's an execution. It's like putting them in front of a firing line," said Bishop Lester Williams, who was supposed to preside at the couple's wedding.

Police Commissioner Ray Kelly responded to the deadly attack saying, "We're not in a position to characterize the shooting at this time." The five cops involved were placed on administrative duty.

Queens district attorney Richard Brown promised "a full and fair investigation," but added that the grand jury inquiry would probably go on for several weeks.

Seeking to defuse the popular outrage, Mayor Michael Bloomberg held a highly publicized meeting at City Hall with Black political and religious figures November 28. He acknowledged that "a lot of people feel that this on top of other incidents that have happened in the past is a pattern," and declared the incident "unacceptable" and "excessive."

Bloomberg added that he considered it an isolated incident and not "anything racially motivated here."

Among those who met with the mayor were Democratic politician Al Sharpton, City Councilman Charles Barron, and Rev. Herbert Daughtry.

At the November 26 protest march, some politicians called for police commissioner Kelly's resignation and others proposed firing the five cops. Malcolm Smith, a Democratic state senator from Queens, urged calm, saying an "impartial" investigation was under way, but was drowned out by a chorus of shouts and boos.

When Councilman Thomas White Jr. said, "We are not going to be angry," the crowd roared back: "Oh, yes we are!"

One demonstrator held a sign that read, "41 now 50," recalling the 1999 police shooting of Amadou Diallo in a hail of 41 bullets. The four cops involved were acquitted.

Noting that those four cops were all white and those involved in the latest shooting included three Black cops, Tee Jones, a resident of Jamaica, said in an interview, "A cop is a cop. It shows the mentality of a New York cop and that they are going to continue to do it."

At the march Donovan Brown told the *Militant*, "The police are murderers and we need to stop it now. That's how they treat Black people." Another protest rally has been called for December 6 at One Police Plaza in Manhattan.

Andrea Morell and Róger Calero contributed to this article.